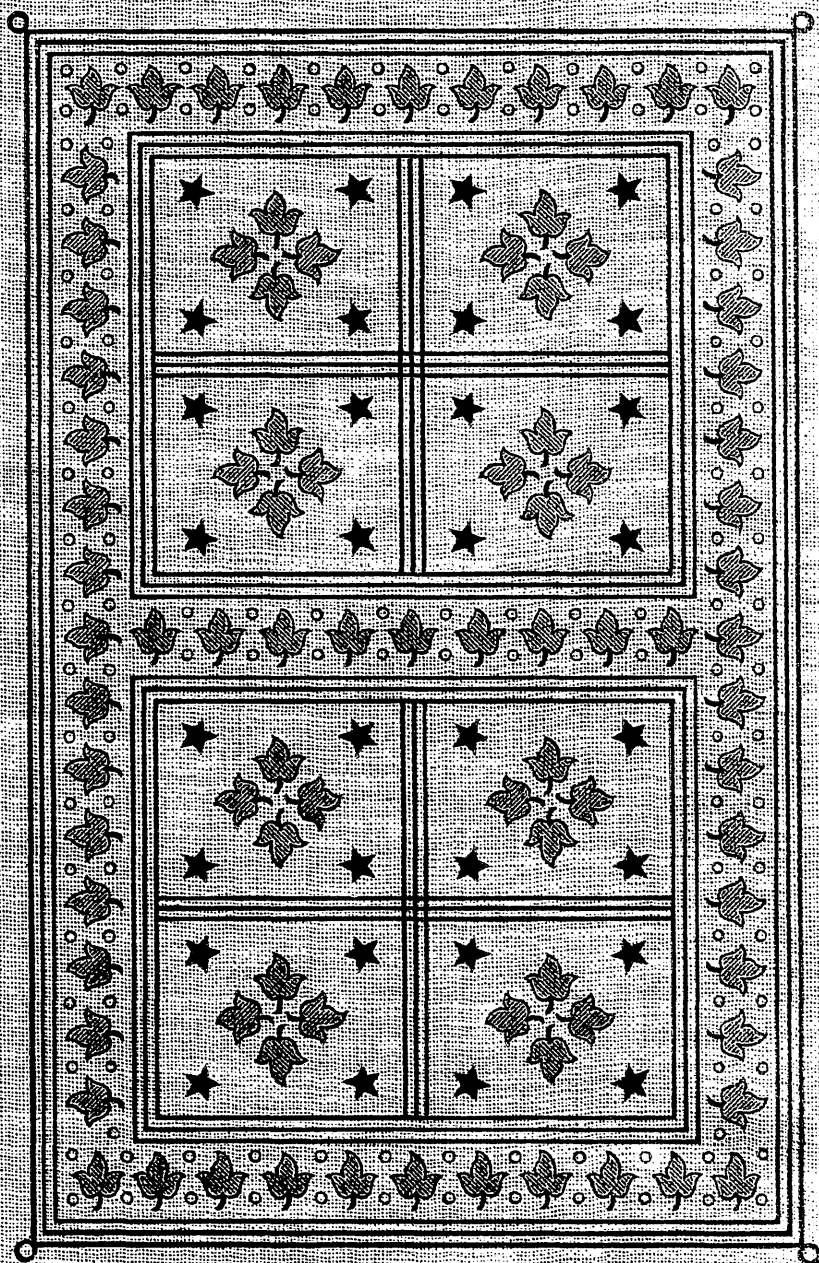




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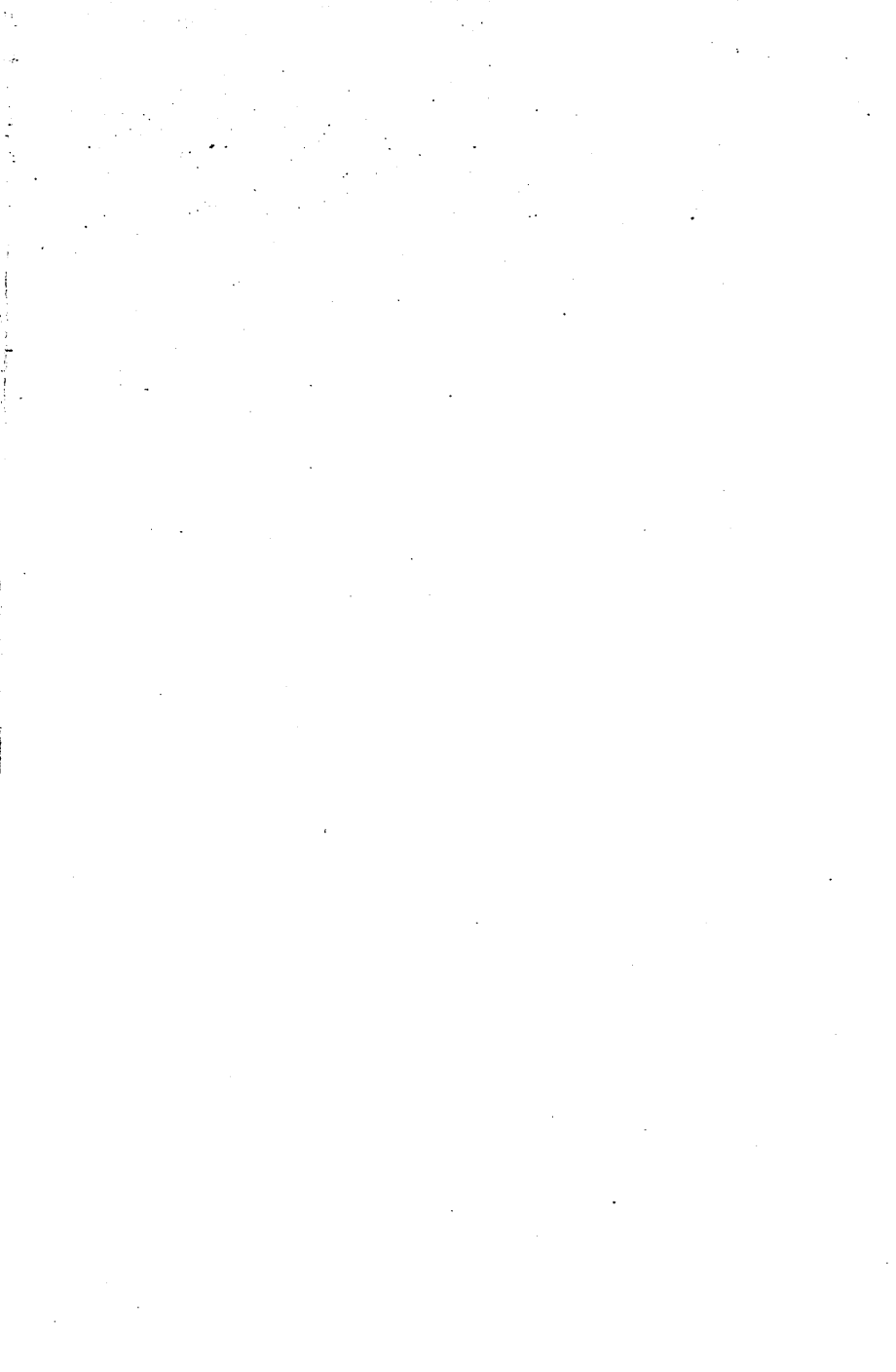
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# THE TRAINING OF INFANTS

*BY THE SAME AUTHOR.*

THE WAY TO TEACH THE BIBLE ACCORDING  
TO THE METHOD IN USE AT THE CHURCH  
OF IRELAND TRAINING COLLEGE, KIL-  
DARE PLACE, DUBLIN. Crown 8vo, 2s.

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LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.,  
LONDON, NEW YORK, BOMBAY AND CALCUTTA.

# THE TRAINING OF INFANTS

WITH ESPECIAL REFERENCE TO

## THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

BY

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BALLIOL COLLEGE, OXFORD

PRINCIPAL OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND TRAINING COLLEGE

AUTHOR OF

CLASS TEACHING"; "FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES"; "AN UNWRITTEN CHAPTER  
IN THE HISTORY OF EDUCATION"; "THE WAY TO TEACH THE BIBLE"

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON

NEW YORK, BOMBAY AND CALCUTTA

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PRESIDENT OF THE MOTHERS' UNION IN IRELAND



## PREFACE

THIS book owes its origin to a suggestion of the Mothers' Union.

Though it deals chiefly with the management of the Sunday School, it is hoped that the hints may be of use to mothers, and all who have young children in their charge.

Not many works on the subject of the training of infants have hitherto been available. The writer would like, in particular, to express his obligations to "The Infant School," by J. Gunn, M.A., D.Sc., and he has acknowledged, in proper place, any other books from which help has been derived. But a great deal of what has been written has come from first-hand study of the infants themselves, and in this the Kildare Place Infant School, under its zealous teachers, has proved an unfailing source of valuable information.

Owing to the fact that the book had gone to press before the delivery of Mr. Archibald's valuable lectures in September, the writer was unable to make use of his experience ; in the main, however, their views will be found to be in substantial agreement.

KILDARE PLACE,

*October, 1910.*

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## CHAPTER I.

### WHAT IS AN INFANT?

Old Ideas—New Ideas—Consequent Duties.

WHAT is a flower? There is not an infant over four years who has not some thoughts upon the subject, and there are few who will not be ready with some answer to the question.

But to answer fully! What that would mean, let Tennyson tell:—

Flower in the crannied wall,  
I pluck you out of the crannies,  
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,  
Little flower—but *if* I could understand  
What you are, root and all, and all in all,  
I should know what God and man is.

In the same way, if we ask, What is an infant? answers will be abundant. All mothers, and most women, claim to know "all about them".

Nevertheless, so far as education is concerned, there are few departments where so many and such serious mistakes have been made. The general tendency has been to regard infants as

little men and women, and to think of them as possessing in miniature all the qualities of their grown-up parents and teachers. Governed by this idea we have planned infant schools after the model of those intended for older children, and have been too ready to judge their merits solely by the proficiency attained in such subjects as reading, writing, or arithmetic. Quite a commonplace criticism of the kindergarten gifts and games has been to the effect that it would be much better if the children were kept to their books! To a certain extent Sunday Schools are not open to this reproach. Recognizing that infants cannot be expected to read for themselves teachers have generally made use of the proper method, and have taught the stories of the Bible by telling them. On the other hand there have been, and there are, grave errors of omission, which would have been corrected but for the prevalent idea that similarity of treatment might rule throughout the school. Separate rooms are not always used, even when they are conveniently available; the grading of the classes is often neglected, and infants of very different ages are grouped together. Very little has been done towards introducing the variety and movement which are essential if the work is to become a living factor in the moulding of the life.

Whatever excuse there may have been for such defects in the past, the marked advance of knowledge in recent years makes it imperative for us to reconsider our position. So long as the nature of children was unknown and unstudied, it was, perhaps, inevitable that the adult should read himself into the infant. Ignorance, however, can no longer be pleaded. Commencing with Froebel, and continued with increasing care and perspicacity, an immense amount of attention has been devoted to the study of child nature. Not alone have educationists, such as Froebel and Herbart, been active; in their own fields the psychologists and the physicians have been equally industrious, and the results of their investigations are now accessible to all.

To expect Sunday School Teachers to study these results at first hand would, perhaps, be unreasonable. Their importance, however, is so great, especially for those who have to deal with Infants, that some account of what has been accomplished is necessary.

It is, perhaps, possible to sum up the present situation in two brief and simple statements.

1. So far is the Infant from being an adult in miniature that he differs in almost every important particular.

2. The teacher must abandon the notion that

if she understands herself she can understand her pupils, and must recognize that their natures require careful study.

Put still more briefly, these statements might appear thus :—

1. Infants differ radically from adults.
2. Child study is essential for success in teaching.

Innocent and even obvious as these statements may appear now that they have been reached, they really mark the beginning of a revolution which is big with promise. As has been noted, many things in our Infant Schools have been defensible solely on the supposition that the little children differ from the big children not in kind but only in degree. Once it is grasped that the differences are radical there can be no resisting the demand for radical difference of treatment. Again the attention of Teachers has commonly been bestowed upon the subjects they were expected to teach; these having been mastered, it was considered that all the rest was more or less a matter of routine. A totally different prospect, and one which is likely to prove of much wider interest, is opened up when attention is pointedly directed to the children, and the voice of authority is heard proclaiming—the road to success lies there.

In confirmation of the statement that Infants differ radically from adults, the opinions of medical and scientific men would seem to be conclusive.

Dr. Oppenheim, whose book on "The Development of the Child"<sup>1</sup> has been five times reprinted within ten years, writes as follows:—

"Children, according to common views, are looked upon as adults in small. Most parents never stop to think of the possibility or likelihood of their own mature condition being any different from the condition of their little ones. This is somewhat remarkable, because the two are not, except in general ways, alike. Moreover, the whole world of animals seems to be similarly disposed so that the young require different conditions, different surroundings, different care from the ordinary adult standard. When the changes are very striking, as, for instance, in the caterpillar, they are regarded as exceptions which bear no analogy in other creatures. There the transition from the creeping, rather plain-coloured insect to the dormant, half-dead chrysalis, and then to the brilliant, fluttering butterfly, is so wonderful that even the dullest imagination is touched; for the wonder inheres not only in changed appearance, but also in changed methods of locomotion, food, general manner of life.

<sup>1</sup> Macmillan & Co.

“Caterpillars, however, are not the only creatures which show remarkable changes. The same idea holds good through all animal life, especially in the higher families. In fact, it is only in the very lowest forms that infancy and youth are alike. As a rule animals, in proportion to the complexity of their organization and functions, mature late in life; the higher the animal, the longer, proportionally to the whole term of life, does it take to reach the full exercise of all its powers. A corollary of this is, that increasing complexity of organization and functions involves correspondingly great changes in actual physical states. This idea, though heretofore our attention has not been much called to it, is beautifully illustrated in human development. We have been in the habit of looking upon a child as a man in small, of looking upon a man as a child somewhat strengthened, with greater experience and knowledge. . . . Society founds its judgments accordingly, it prescribes its methods of education, of social and domestic care accordingly, it sees almost no differences besides these adventitious ones between them.

“As a matter of fact, it would be hard to find many salient factors, beyond the most fundamental laws, in which the infant and the adult exactly resemble each other.”

The position thus defined is supported by a detailed examination of the parts of the body, and a careful comparison between those of the Infant and the adult, and the conclusion is drawn as follows :—

“As the previous chapters clearly show, the child is in practically every respect different from the adult, and every part of him is constantly changing.”

Nothing would be easier than to multiply quotations from modern writers to the same effect as the above ; the difficulty would be to find any who took a different view. All, however, that is necessary is to show the deductions which follow from these facts.

As Dr. Oppenheim tells us : “ Every part ” (of the Infant) “ is continually changing ”. There is no period when the change may be taken as at an end ; still less any time when it is possible to say the boy or the girl who was yesterday an Infant, and unlike an adult, is to-day changed, and likeness has taken the place of unlikeness. As a consequence, if the development is to be such as we all desire, there is need of perpetual care and watchfulness, if the changes which are inevitable are to move in the right direction.

Here is the way Dr. Oppenheim describes our duties, and shows how the truths now estab-

lished with reference to the nature of children must be brought to bear upon all schemes of education :—

“If the child is to be developed in the finest way, every possible influence that acts upon him should be controlled to serve the ends of development. The energies that belong to building up this range of potentialities should be of the finest quality, should have the greatest liberty of action, should be awarded the highest place in the community. The training which the child is to get should be what is essentially designed for him in his unripe condition, for it cannot be similar to that of an adult. So long as one recognizes that the child is absolutely different from the adult, not only in size, but also in every element which goes to make up the final state of maturity, one is more apt to get a true method of development.”

As we read clear and definite statements such as the above we have the less difficulty, as Sunday School Teachers, in accepting them, when we are reminded how completely they are in accord with the methods advocated by St. Paul. Writing to the Corinthians, and referring to their inability to receive and assimilate advanced spiritual teaching, he compares them to babes and says : “I have fed you with milk, and not with meat ; for hitherto



ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able".<sup>1</sup>

In connexion with the physical development of children there are many matters which claim the attention of the Teacher of Infant Schools. Owing to the limited time of the lesson, the Sunday School Teacher has a more restricted area. It will therefore suffice, perhaps, to deal only with such aspects of growth as need watching, even when the teaching comes but once a week.

The "tender age" is a phrase in common use in connexion with children, but all that the words imply is seldom present to the mind. Every spring the fronds of our ferns, which have been wrapped up in safety all the winter, begin to uncoil. The process is comparatively rapid; only a few weeks pass from the time the first stir is noticed, to the expansion of the fully developed frond. But the time is one which, as every fern lover knows, demands special watchfulness and care. During the transition period, while

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. III. 2; cf. Heb. v. 12-14. It is instructive as to the prevalence of mistaken views about children to find a learned writer commenting upon the former passage thus: "It may be an interesting indication of the 'manliness' of St. Paul's character that he constantly uses the words babe and childhood in a depreciatory sense"!

every part is changing rapidly, there is always great delicacy ; a sudden fall of temperature, or a rude blast, will arrest growth altogether ; a light touch is often sufficient to cause fracture ; an imperfect distribution of light mars symmetry, and may readily produce deformity. Very remarkable, too, are the methods and varying rates of growth observed at the different stages. Sometimes the shapes temporarily assumed are of the most unexpected kind ; for instance, some of our native species, having worked hard at the business of unrolling for days, just when the upright position seems well within grasp, drop their heads right back, and have to get to work in a totally different direction, before they can recover what seems to be lost ground, and stand proudly erect.

The period during which children are in the Infant classes is one of very rapid growth, corresponding to the delicate expanding period of the fern. Different parts grow at different rates, and the rates differ at different times. Sometimes, to quote a felicitous phrase, one kind of growth is "in season" sometimes another. An easily observed instance is the coming of the second teeth. Just as the fern grower must watch, and guard against any interference with the normal development of his fronds, so does the Teacher need to be on guard. Changing humours, and capacities

which seem to vary every lesson, instead of causing surprise and disappointment, must be expected. Growth does not proceed on mathematical lines. It sometimes seems to be moving by fits and starts. The truth would seem to be that nature is too wise to work at all parts at once. When the teeth are coming the wits may seem to be going ; dental development, and mental development, each require separate attention. Anything of the nature of interference is certain to be harmful, and may cause permanent injury. Over-pressure, whether in the form of too little freedom of movement, or too severe imposition of work, must be carefully avoided. Excessive exertion, physical or mental, at any period of life is injurious, during the Infant period it is destructive.

These cautions which apply to all the parts of our pupils, as the organs, the muscles, the nerves, the bones, are especially necessary in connexion with the brain.

Every observer knows that the brains of young children show remarkable development so far as mere size is concerned. The brain of an Infant a year old, weighs nearly half as much as the brain of an adult. The brains of the pupils in an Infant School have for the most part reached three-fourths of their full weight. If we were to judge by size alone, the inference would follow

that however careful we should be about working the tender and undeveloped limbs, the big brain at any rate was ready for vigorous action. Only too commonly this mistake has been made, and with the saddest results. The truth is, that though the brain is large in size it is small in actual development.

“In children the brain is large, but chemically it contains a large percentage of water; it is therefore softer than in adult life, and the specific gravity is lower. Its gray and white substances differ very little from each other in colour and composition. And not only in the brain, but also in almost all the tissues, there is a marked difference in cell-formation between the young and the old.”<sup>1</sup>

Side by side with these truths about the nature of the Infant brain, it will be well to place some facts with reference to the way it develops. There is nothing more patent with reference to the young of all animals than the craving for continual movement. Our attention will be drawn to this characteristic in more connexions than one as we proceed with our plans for the religious teaching of the Infants. At present it is noted as a brain symptom. All actions take their orders from the

<sup>1</sup> Oppenheim, “The Development of the Child,” ch. II.

brain, which is enthroned like a central telegraph operator in connexion with all parts of the system. The activities of children are therefore a sign that the brain is at work.

Here there comes in a consideration of very great importance in connexion with the education of young children, and one which calls for more attention than it has hitherto received in the Sunday School. It needs no exceptional reasoning power to be able to infer that if perpetual motion is the way in which the brain finds expression, it is by means of motion we must seek the natural way of brain development. In other words, if the brain develops itself by action, action is a prime factor to be employed in the development of the brain.

At first sight this doctrine may seem a little difficult of acceptance, owing to our commonly associating the brain only with thought. But thought after all may be described as suppressed action. Watch two people talking, and see how their thoughts leap into movement in the gesticulations of their hands, and the shaking of their heads. Observe a reader to whom books come seldom, and with whom the exercise of reading is rare; if he does not find it necessary to speak what he sees, it is tolerably certain that his lips will break into motion. Who has not been in-

interrupted in a long tot, by the way in which his neighbour gave voice to his operations? From all which it would seem clear that action is the brain's natural way of expression, and it follows that when the brain is immature and unformed, action ought always to occupy an important part in its development.

The bearing of this conclusion upon a phenomenon of too common occurrence will probably suggest itself at once. There are few who have not been brought into contact with precocious children. The usual symptoms are in the first instance wits sharpened out of all proportion to the time of life, and afterwards a want of staying power, which generally results in a backward instead of a foremost place.

The unfortunate results of precocity are so well established that the precocious child is dreaded rather than desired, but the explanation of his occurrence needs wider attention if the number of child failures is to be properly reduced. The precocious child resembles a forced plant, you get results, and you get them earlier than nature intended; but they are not to be compared with those got in the natural way, and the plant is worn out in the process. If the large, unripe brain of a child is forced, it will get to work in a way that is injurious. There may be immediate

results, even of a brilliant kind, but the final result will be loss.

If our Infants are to receive in Sunday School and elsewhere the teaching which nature prescribes, we must think of them and treat them as wholes. The notion that our duty begins and ends with cramming facts into the brain must be abandoned, and we must recognize that healthy activities of all kinds need encouragement and direction, and this not alone for the sake of the body, but also for the sake of the brain.

## CHAPTER II.

### WHAT OUGHT A TEACHER OF INFANTS TO BE?

HAVING given a general answer to the question What is an infant? our next duty is to consider what a Teacher of Infants ought to be.

It has long been recognized that the teaching of Infants is one of the most difficult parts of education. For the Infant classes the wise superintendent selects his best-equipped Teachers. In this as in many other matters experience has led the way, leaving explanation to follow in due time. The explanation of the difficulty of instructing very young children lies in a truth which has been made prominent by Herbart and his numerous followers. Attention is called to it here on account of its practical value; it may be profitably carried with us in all our teaching work.

If we ask ourselves the question how do children learn, or, to put the problem more inclusively, how is knowledge acquired, we shall find much help towards an answer if we investigate one or two situations.



Take Mozart listening in the Pope's chapel to Allegri's "Miserere". In no other place was the music ever heard. The singers were forbidden under pain of excommunication from carrying copies out of the sacred building. Up to the time of Mozart's visit the "Miserere" had been reserved absolutely for those who worshipped there, and for them alone. The great composer reproduced the whole score—from memory. What enabled him to achieve this wonderful feat? Manifestly it was his extraordinary knowledge of musical form. Of the others who may have listened to the music with Mozart, a proportion would be able to reproduce with differing degrees of accuracy the arias they heard; in their case also the knowledge of music they already possessed would make this possible. The majority of the hearers would be conscious of little more than the pleasure they experienced; this, too, would be governed, as to its degree, by what they knew about music from previous experience. To a few what they heard would be meaningless, or even distasteful, just as the music of an African tribe can have no charm for ears which are wholly unfamiliar with it. In all such cases what makes the difference is the amount of knowledge previously possessed.

Wherever we turn similar truths will meet

us ; in further illustration, let us take something from the lives of boys and girls. Bring a group of school children to visit a country place. Here is a motor mowing-machine busily at work. If there are any who know only town life, their ideas will be occupied with railways or perhaps motor-cars, and they will think chiefly of the nice ride the driver is getting. But country children will watch the effect on the grass, and compare it with what they have seen done by other methods. If the garden is visited, there will be many exclamations over any flowers that may be in prominent bloom, the general knowledge of colour ensures attention of this kind ; but if any of the children have been cultivating flowers themselves, their interest in what they see will go much further, and will be exactly proportioned to the amount of experience they bring with them. In the kitchen the girls will find their previous knowledge opening up new vistas ; in the workshop it will be the same with any of the boys who have had any mechanical training ; and so through the whole visit, new knowledge will be acquired by means of the old.

Reflecting upon situations such as the above, Herbart came to the conclusion that in order to get knowledge we must possess knowledge, and that the chief business of the teacher in dealing

with new subjects is to handle them in the way most likely to bring the fresh information into touch or kinship with the old. "Proceed from the known to the unknown" has long been a principle familiar to teachers. Herbart and his school have gone far towards establishing that it is the only possible principle. For since "things which are absolutely strange are apt to prove matters of indifference," it would seem to follow that the way to abolish indifference is to deal only with things which are more or less familiar.

In the light given by this explanation as to how knowledge is acquired, the special difficulties of the task of the teacher of Infants become manifest. A little child's range of ideas is so extremely limited that a perplexing problem occurs with each new piece of knowledge which has to be presented. There is compensation in the elementary nature and consequent simplicity of the subjects to be taught. Nevertheless the simplest ideas, if wholly strange, will find no resting-place in the brain, and much skill is required for presenting the subjects in such a way as to make them permanent possessions.

For the acquirement of the desirable skill, it would be natural to prescribe a course of training. The utility of training for Sunday School as well as Weekday School work is so fully re-

cognized that training colleges are being established to prepare only for the Sunday School. Manifestly, however, such courses as they supply are at present within the reach only of the few.

A simple means of preparation, and one which has the sovereign advantage of being accessible to all, is to be found in the examinations for teachers held annually by the Sunday School Society for Ireland.<sup>1</sup> The Candidate Teachers' course is largely concerned with Infants, and directs attention to the acquirement of the qualifications which a teacher of Infants needs.

It is, however, one of the objects of this book to help, in the home and in the school, many for whom other help is not available. The more complete means and methods ought to be borne in mind, but so long as they are somewhat of the nature of counsels of perfection there will be some gain at any rate in giving such assistance as is possible in a book.

We therefore invite those, whether mothers or Teachers, who feel their need of help in dealing with Infants, to accompany us on a tour among the children. We ought to be able to make together such a general study of child nature as will help with the study of individual children,

<sup>1</sup> Full particulars may be obtained from the Assistant Secretary, at the office of the Society, 4 Kildare Place, Dublin.

which every Teacher must make for herself ; and it ought to be possible in this way to lay a foundation of facts which will be helpful when we come to consider how best to build up the essentials of religious truth.

There is one indispensable qualification which we must take with us ; it is one which few women lack. A Teacher without it may perhaps accomplish something with senior classes, but Infants she must not attempt. Needless to say the qualification referred to is love. The necessity arises partly from the practical impossibility of understanding children unless we love them—love alone can enable us to enter sympathetically into their world and read its secrets ; but even more serious, amounting indeed to an insurmountable barrier, is the fact that children are not themselves, in a sense are not children at all, unless approached with love. Before those who deal with them in a stilted or formal way they close up, like flowers at the touch of rain or wind. We must have the warm sun of love if they are to open out before us, and let us see into the secrets of their hearts.

## CHAPTER III.

### AN EXCURSION INTO THE DOMAINS OF INFANCY.

WE are now ready for our excursion into the domains of infancy. We know that we shall find the tiny people formed like a race apart ; we have grasped the fact that if we are to succeed in teaching them we must associate the knowledge we want to give with knowledge that is already possessed ; and we recognize that our usefulness as Teachers must be largely governed by what we can learn about the little ones themselves. We are, therefore, eager to study them carefully. They command our love, our hearts warm as we come among them, and we shall not grudge such labour as their claims may impose.

In the following passage Carlyle probes deeply into the subject :—<sup>1</sup>

“In all the sports of children, were it only in their wanton breakages and defacements, you shall discern a creative instinct : the Mankin feels that he is a born Man, that his vocation is to work. The choicest present you can make him

<sup>1</sup> “Sartor Resartus,” Bk. II, ch. II.

is a Tool, be it knife or pea-gun, for construction or for destruction ; either way it is for Work, for Change. In gregarious sports of skill or strength, the Boy trains himself to Co-operation, for war or peace, as governor or governed : the little Maid again, provident of her domestic destiny, takes with preference to Dolls."

Even the genius of a Carlyle was not able to shake itself free from the belief that the infant must be looked on as a "mankin" or little man ; and he lays an unduly heavy burden on the capacity for imitation when he seems to represent the bulk of a child's activity as proceeding from a desire to copy its elders. Nevertheless his picture is infinitely stimulating, and for the most part accurate.

As we proceed to make our notes of the characteristics of young children, the first thing we observe is their ceaseless *activity*. When awake they are never still. Prominent, central, all-pervading is this activity of body and mind ; which perhaps, having regard to what has been already established,<sup>1</sup> ought to be described as the activity of the mind finding its natural outlet in the unceasing movements of the body. It is of last importance for the educator, whether parent or Teacher, to recognize something like perpetual

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 13.

motion as inseparable from healthy childhood. There is no getting away from it. All young animals are continually on the move. Contrast the gambols and frolics of the foal with the staid sobriety of the mother. Look at those kittens revelling in an endless maze of antics while the old cat lies stolidly quiet, taking no notice unless some liberty more than usually audacious calls for chastisement. From the foal and the kitten learn what you must expect in the child. A healthy child is always ready to break into motion. Suspect something wrong if you find a tendency to sit still, and remember that the habit of remaining noiseless and motionless which, with right training, will come naturally before long, must not be prematurely enforced. A good Infant School, and a good Infant class, must be full of outlets for motion.

When we make up our minds to expect activity in the Infants, our next care will be to investigate the typical forms which their activity takes. We shall find ourselves confronted everywhere with "mud pies". It is told of the present Bishop of London that coming across some remarkable erections in the street, he asked the makers what they were, and got answer "the cathedral"; pushing the inquiry and demanding where was the bishop, he was met by the ambig-



uous explanation that for the making of a bishop "there was not enough dirt"! There was perhaps more than "construction" to be found in those street arabs, but their talent for cathedral building was only one phase of a tendency which is universal. "Mud pies" in all shapes and sizes are a staple delight of childhood. Few of us recollect much of our early years, yet most of us, if we try, can recall the thrill of the seashore, with its sand, and spades, and buckets. Truly surprising, in their perfection, are the houses, and churches, and feudal castles which spring up under the stimulus of the modern seaside competitions. Their creators are the Michael Angelos of childhood. But go where you may you will find the inborn activity of children taking shape in constructing. Whether they will or no, i.e. apart altogether from the question of their power to will, they are always astir and adoining, and there is no way in which this ceaseless activity finds more grateful outlet than in constructing or creating. The actual piece of construction may be only the careless placing of one brick upon another, or the scribbling, on paper, or sand, or slate, of a few lines, charged with meaning for the drawer, however uninforming to you, but in some form or other you will find construction going on continually, and it furnishes

a rich and fruitful field for the educator's observation and influence.

This constructive capacity of the child may be said to be founded on a number of qualities by whose means the materials necessary for its exercise are acquired.

-- Let us first note curiosity—a quality which children possess in common with the young of most animals. Place a kitten in a strange room, and watch her movements. Everything has to be examined. Quietly, gravely, systematically a grand tour is organized, odd corners are investigated, recesses are probed; wherever her eye can reach or her spring can take her, there puss's eager curiosity is at work. Similar, though apparently not so systematic, and certainly not so easily noticed, is the procedure of the child. Every mother knows that her child will crawl to the fire and be badly burned if not either carefully watched, or kept at safe distance by a fire-guard. It is not so usual to recognize this as part of the same instinct of curiosity which on the one hand takes the kitten round the room, and on the other takes the explorer fearlessly into the crater of Vesuvius to see what he can discover there.

The neat and prim nurse is shocked continually by the havoc children make among their toys.

It seldom occurs to her that no desire to destroy impels the action. What the child wants is to find out all he can ; to do this effectively he must needs get to the inside, and in the process the outside suffers. We note the curiosity of the infant less than that of the cat, because it is less concentrated and more diffuse. All the same it is an ever-present quality, one to be reckoned with and used. No sooner can the babe see than it wants to explore. In the earliest stages the mouth seems to offer the readiest road to information ; babes carry everything to their mouths. Presently the mouth is for the most part discarded in favour of the hand ; the hand is always on the search. But it is not till the hand is reinforced by the tongue that the innate curiosity of the child becomes apparent, often obtrusively apparent, to all. No one brought into contact with children can escape their endless questionings. One of the most important problems of the infant class is—How may these childish interrogations, and the instinct of curiosity, which they voice, be turned to best account ?

Another quality abundantly present in childhood is the love and power of imitation. If curiosity leads the way, the capacity for imitation follows close behind, and by its constant exercise

gives permanence to what is discovered. Hence it becomes the foundation of nearly all a child's knowledge. In its earlier manifestations, so little does imitation arise from a desire to ape grown-up ways, that it can hardly be described as even conscious. This at least is the view of one of the most acute observers of children.

"Mechanically, as it seems to me, children, as soon as the second month, make attempts at sounds, in order to answer people speaking to them, or to imitate the sounds of the piano. Likewise at the age of three months, having learnt mechanically to follow the direction of a look or a movement, they will fix their eyes on objects which they see other people looking at, turning their heads also sometimes when they see other people turn *theirs*, and all this, though in a very limited measure, with the intention of imitating."<sup>1</sup>

Very soon, however, this half-conscious power quickens, passing into a deliberate determination to copy, and developing into the desire to copy for a definite end, such as for the sake of being like grown-up men and women. So much is this the case, that almost all the child's interests

<sup>1</sup> Perez, "First Three Years of Childhood," ch. vi. p. 111, Swan Sonnenschein & Co. This is a book to be read by all who are interested in child study.

take imitative shape; he plays at shop, at horses, at soldiers, at ships. Everywhere he carries into his own world what he has noticed in the world without. As Wordsworth has taught us, it seems "as if his whole vocation were endless imitation".

Less prominent perhaps, but generally noticeable, and calling for brief mention in this connexion, are the desire to collect or acquire, and the tendency to co-operate with other children. The toy very early comes to be recognized as personal property, even the bottle seems to arouse a sort of proprietorial interest. Strange collections are made in order to stock the "shops" of childhood; the stones and shells of the seashore become valued possessions. Then there are few children who do not naturally club together in the plays which for them form the serious business of life. Shop, horses, soldiers, and sailors all imply, even if they do not necessitate, companions. Children who apparently prefer being alone are the exceptions. Often they really prove the rule in a very touching way. Their preference for loneliness comes from having been without companions—they are only children.

Reverting once more to the activity which is so pronounced in all young things, we shall be able to find it manifesting itself in what might almost be described as another world. We have

seen the creative powers which it inspires and sustains, and have noted the different qualities—curiosity, imitation, collecting, co-operation—which help. So far, however, we have been busy rather with external action—what the children do with their hands, the shapes which their plays assume. We pass next to the realms of mind. There is, indeed, no sharp dividing line between the two; as we have seen,<sup>1</sup> action is but a form of thought. The two realms however—the outer and the inner—may be separated conveniently for purposes of study. Helped by what we have observed of the outer, we now pass inward. The region which we enter is mysterious; many a track lies there to which no key has yet been found. But our work is primarily engaged with the heart and mind, it is the souls of the children that we seek; it is imperative therefore that we should at least know something of the great internal world of mind.

Most of what we have to describe may be fitly grouped round what is known as imagination, or more accurately creative imagination. The activity of the child, not content with doing, busies itself much with thinking, and childish imaginations are the forms it takes. So prominent a feature of childlife is imagination that childhood is

<sup>1</sup> See above p. 13.

sometimes called "The age of Imagination". Mr. Sully, writing of it under this title, says :—

"One of the few things we seemed to be certain of with respect to child nature was that it was fancy-full. Childhood, we all know, is the age for dreaming, for decking out the world as yet unknown, with the gay colours of imagination, for living a life of play or happy make-believe."<sup>1</sup>

It is well known that "children are born observers". The curiosity which we have seen at work, ministering to outward construction, does not stop there. The eye is always at work gathering new facts and conveying them in pictorial shape to the mind. Then they are worked up, so to speak, in endless and wonderful ways. As we grow older the tendency is to become self-centred, we look in, we are occupied with our own reflections. Unless trouble is taken to counteract the tendency, we become less and less observant. The young child on the other hand has little of his own to occupy him, he therefore looks out, and takes in, so far as his understanding permits, all that comes his way. M. Perez<sup>2</sup> thus explains :—

"In children, their relative psychic inertia explains the vivacity of their impressions, their

<sup>1</sup> "Studies of Childhood," ch. II.

<sup>2</sup> "First Three Years," ch. VI.

strong objectivity, their temporary possession by some idea: they are, as it were, at the mercy of momentary impressions, and especially of those of the greatest intensity. All that they see they believe to be exactly as they see it. All that is told to them rises in vivid images before them. All the ideas that are suggested to them appear to them in a visible form, and they instantly proceed to execute or imitate them."

Every one who has come into living contact with a child knows how actively the imagination works. It is a matter of common observation that the rag doll, or the rough horse, takes precedence even of the finished article; this is because they allow scope for the imagination. In vivid mental pictures the child fills in the gaps at will, and enjoys the exercise. Not infrequently this imaginative power creates beings, who are certainly treated, perhaps actually considered, to be living realities. The writer knew a child—she was an only child—who filled in her loneliness by creating "cousins in the wall." Many and long were the conversations between her and the "cousins". They lived in one of the walls of her bedroom. There they were always to be found. All sorts of confidences passed between them. What they said was often quoted; it seemed to be invested with a peculiar authority, and information



gathered from this intimate source was treated as sacrosanct. Even to this day that child, now grown to womanhood, looks back with special tenderness upon the imaginary intimacies of those far-off years.<sup>1</sup>

In further illustration of the working of the creative imagination of children some extracts from the reminiscences of a gifted writer will be useful. They differ little, save in the brilliant way they are expressed, from what may be paralleled over and over again in the children with whom we are all brought into contact. The quotations are from Sully's "Studies of Childhood"; he is dealing with the childhood of Aurore Dupin, or George Sand:—

"Her mother, she tells us, used to shut her within four straw chairs in order to keep her from playing with the fire. She would amuse herself by pulling out the straws with her hands (she always felt the need of occupying her hands) and composing in a loud voice interminable stories. They were, of course, modelled on the familiar fairy-tale pattern. The principal characters were a good fairy, a good prince, and a beautiful princess. There were but few wicked beings, and never great misfortunes. 'All arranges itself

<sup>1</sup> For other similar instances cf. Sully, "Studies of Childhood," ch. II.

under the influence of a thought, smiling and optimistic as childhood.”

“She says much of her day-dreaming which overtook her both when alone and when joining her companions in play. It visited her regularly as she sat at her mother’s feet in the evening listening to her reading, with an old screen covered with green taffeta between her and the fire.

“I saw a little of the fire through this worn taffeta, and it formed on it little stars, whose radiation I increased by blinking my eyes. Then little by little I lost the meaning of the phrase which my mother read. Her voice threw me into a kind of moral stupor, in which it was impossible for me to follow an idea. Images began to shape themselves before me, and came and settled on the green screen. They were woods, meadows, rivers, towns of a grotesque and gigantic architecture, as I have often seen them in dreams; enchanted palaces with gardens like nothing that exists, with thousands of birds of azure, gold, and purple, which sprang on the flowers, and let themselves be caught. . . . There were roses—green, black, violet, and especially blue. . . . I closed my eyes and still saw them, but when I reopened them I could only find them again upon the screen.

"In her play . . . she continued to indulge in her passion for vivid imaginative realization. When playing at crossing the windings of a river, rudely marked with chalk on the floor, five minutes would suffice to generate this kind of hallucination.

"I lost all notion of reality, and believed I could see the trees, the water, the rocks—a vast country—and the sky now bright, now laden with clouds which were about to burst and increase the danger of crossing the river. In what a vast space children think they are acting when they thus walk from table to bed, from the fireplace to the door!"

One further extract may be given in illustration of that remark about the "vast space in which children think they are acting"; it is important in connexion with our general subject—the imaginative power of children.

"To Aurore's ardent imagination, play was more than the half-hearted make-believe it often is with duller children. She was able to immerse her whole consciousness in the scene, the occupation imagined, so as to lose all account of her actual surroundings. One evening, at dusk, she and her cousin were playing at chasing one another from tree to tree for which the bed-curtains did duty. The room had disappeared

for these little day-dreamers ; they were really in a gloomy country at the oncoming of night, and when they were called to dinner they heard nothing. Aurore's mother had finally to carry her to the table, and she could ever after recall the astonishment she felt on seeing the light, the table, and other red objects about her."

Deeply interesting, and of special importance in connexion with the main object of this book, is the way in which G. Sand's imagination worked with reference to religion. By her mother she was early instructed in the main truths of religion. When about four years old, however, she went to live with her grandmother. The old lady was a bigoted and determined disciple of Voltaire and Rousseau, and she laboured assiduously to remove every vestige of faith from the child's heart. She succeeded in destroying her belief in Christianity, but the yawning gap thus made in her life could not remain unfilled. Deprived of the consolations of true religion, she went to work to invent a substitute, with the result that her daring imagination enabled her to evolve a new religion, with creed and ritual all complete.

Nothing would be gained by enlarging upon the childish faith so devised ; the important point for us is the way in which imagination bears

upon, and ought to be made to help, religion. If the imagination of G. Sand actually had power to construct a religion of its own, it is manifest that the imagination of children in general must play an important part in enabling them to realize religious facts and truths. Mr. Sully, dealing with moral education, writes in favour of the more careful investigation of the imagination of children, and urges that "a careful following out of the various lines of imaginative activity may show how moral education, by vividly suggesting to the child's imagination a worthy part, a praiseworthy action, may work powerfully on the unformed and flexible structure of his young will, moving it dutywards". If this be so with reference to a subject largely abstract like moral teaching, how much more must it be the case in connexion with a religion which centres in the inexhaustible wonder and beauty of the life of our Divine Master.

Having now dealt in a general way with some of the more prominent physical and intellectual characteristics of young children, we shall naturally be expected to say something about their moral and spiritual qualities. Here in particular lies the domain of the Sunday School Teacher. How are we to make the best of the little ones? What can we learn about their spiritual nature

which will enable us to help these children, who have been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under His banner against sin, the world, and the devil? Here we enter a still more mysterious region. "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."<sup>1</sup>

There are, however, two outstanding facts which will serve at least to indicate what we may expect.

Of the Saviour Himself we are told that "he increased in wisdom and stature". There we find a truth with which we have been busy in connexion with children in general. The Lord as a child was a perfect child. He needed to develop before He became a perfect man. This was true of His spiritual as well as of His intellectual and physical nature. We gather, therefore, that in investigating the spiritual nature of the child we must not expect a replica of what is found in the adult, and must not be surprised if what we discover is of a wholly different nature.

The second fact is given us by St. Paul, when

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. II. II.

he lays down the truth that "Where no law is there is no transgression".<sup>1</sup> It may seem a little startling to say that young children are without moral sense; yet something of this kind must be said if we are to understand them, and make use of our knowledge for their good. The consideration of a fact or two will give the outlines of the situation. The infant, as every mother will assure us, very soon learns that some things are prohibited while others are encouraged. To persist in one direction leads to scoldings, possibly to blows, to make progress in the other wins caresses and applause. Thus a knowledge of what to avoid, and what to pursue, is soon reached. At this early stage what it amounts to is a knowledge of what mother or nurse condemn, or of what they approve. "Transgression," which was impossible for the newborn babe, makes entrance so soon as mother's law is learned. Still, however, the infant has no morals in the real sense. A dog is on much the same level. To come when called, to follow when told, to perform at command, to eschew what is forbidden—these and such-like make up his rules of life. They are his master's ordinances and as such he accepts them. Both infant and dog may be credited with some knowledge of what is allowed and

<sup>1</sup> Rom. IV. 15.

what is prohibited. More than this can scarcely be said. Of *sin* in itself they know nothing ; they are no more moral than the thief, who avoids stealing when he knows the policeman is looking, but hesitates no longer the moment he is sure his back is turned. The difference between the two—the all-important difference for the teacher—is that while the animal can rise no higher, it is otherwise with the child. Gradually, no doubt, but surely, he comes to understand that behind prohibitions and commendations great principles lie enshrined. Conduct has to be ordered not merely by what is immediately enjoined, but in conformity with something infinitely more permanent and consistent. The elementary knowledge of what may, and what may not be done, as prescribed by another, ripens into a sense of right and wrong, as something which stands apart, superior to, independent of all else. The wrong is abhorred because it is hateful in itself ; the right is loved because it is beautiful in itself. The mind, which at first was ignorant of all law, and therefore of all morality, has climbed through the unreflecting stages of obedience or disobedience to mere precepts, wherein there was little to choose between child and animal, until now the heights are scaled ; good and evil are seen in their true relations ; the relation which they bear



to God is grasped ; conscience, which is the voice of God, asserts its claim to guide the life.

It is not to be expected that we should be able to mark out, as on a chart, the stages whereby this high development is reached ; they will differ in each individual child, and furthermore they lie in regions which are withdrawn from the scope of our observation. Certain marks along the road, however, will here and there, and from time to time, become prominent. We shall find the qualities which we have noticed in connexion with the physical and mental development of the infant of use also, as handmaidens, in the spiritual progress. What it is possible to do in the way of spiritual construction we have seen in the case of G. Sand ;<sup>1</sup> the instinct of curiosity prompts continual questionings and searches into the unknown. Who has not listened with interest, and often with surprise and even awe, to the deep inquiries which come from childish lips ? The capacity for imitation absorbs and embodies the results which come to hand. How soon the little ones learn the difference between what belongs to themselves and to others, and how tenacious is their sense of property ! What a clear notion of what is fair and proper springs up in their dealings with one another ! How quick

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 36.

they are to recognize anything of the nature of injustice on the part of their elders. Symptoms such as these point to the growth of the moral sense, and may readily be mistaken for an advanced stage of development. Side by side with them, however, there are others which serve as correctives in our estimate. For instance, few who have cared for children have failed to notice their defective views of truth. The unimaginative and conscientious parent often suffers keenly when brought into contact with children's lies. What these and similar traits should teach us is not that children are depraved; but that they are unformed, and apart, living in a world of their own. We must ever remember that the child's ideas, and the child's standards differ widely from ours. It is only in proportion as we grasp this fundamental fact, and penetrate into the domains of childhood under its guidance, that we shall succeed in being really helpful in the moulding of the children's lives.

The last of the characteristics of infancy and childhood which we shall notice is one which, like the inherent activity of the little people, affects all the rest. If their activity keeps them always on the move, either in doing or thinking, their lack of staying power, and consequent craving for novelty and variety, keeps them always

changing from one thing to another. The child is unceasingly active, his activity takes a constructive form, but it works by fits and starts.

An attractive if somewhat impulsive governess once volunteered to take charge for the whole afternoon of a child, aged about three, of whom she was fond. Game after game was tried in rapid succession; at last her repertoire was exhausted, and still the boy kept demanding new delights. It was too much, and she broke down saying: "I am sick and tired of you, T". Presently she was convulsed with laughing when he looked up and said, quite gravely, seeming to weigh his words, "And I of 'oo too, W".

This fidgety restlessness, and longing for change and novelty, must always be expected. Sustained attention is not a childish characteristic; impressions, though real, are not deep. What seems to engross the whole being this moment, often appears to have escaped from consciousness the next. There is a great deal of philosophy in Mr. Langbridge's poem, "An Extempore Prayer," some of which I shall venture to quote:—

Putting up my glasses,  
What did I behold?  
Two tiny lasses  
Kneeling on the mould.

. . . . .

Then I listened hidden :  
    " Oh, Lord," Rosie said,  
    " You know that we're forbidden  
    To step on the bed.  
Of course I didn't mean it,  
    But what will mother think ?  
O Lord, *have* you seen it ?  
    I've broke the sweet pink.  
" Oh, it is so frightful  
    To hurt mother's flowers ;  
No one has such spiteful  
    Hard hearts as ours.  
Keep us, do, in pity  
    From dreadful sins like these ! "  
" Amen," said Kitty,  
    And jumped from her knees.  
Ten minutes after,  
    What did I hear ?  
Little shrieks and laughter  
    Ringing out clear ;  
Three saucy noses  
    And three shining heads  
Playing, " Ring o' Roses "  
    Right through the beds !

Just as we are wrong in expecting children's bodies to remain still, so we must be prepared for an inexhaustible variety in the realms of mind and spirit. Even adult audiences find it difficult to concentrate attention when there is monotony ; in the case of children it is an impossibility.

## CHAPTER IV.

### APPLICATION TO THE SUNDAY SCHOOL OF THE RESULTS OF THE EXCURSION—I.

WE may now return from our excursion and think over what it has shown. The problem in hand is the adaptation of the Infant's class in the Sunday School to the needs of infancy. Our brief study of young children will help as we consider what provision we should make, and how we should deal with our tender pupils.

Put in few words, this is what our discoveries tell us: we shall find our Infants a busy, active crew; so long as they are awake they are at work, constructing or creating; with their hands they are ever building, using whatsoever comes their way; with their minds they are continually fashioning worlds of romance, echoes rather than pictures of the world of sense; with their spirits they are drinking in and shaping great truths and principles, as they find them embodied in nature and life. The raw material for this ceaseless industry is unfailingly supplied by a curiosity which never

flags ; it is worked up by means of the marvellous powers of imitation with which all children are gifted. But throughout all runs "the fidgets" ; perseverance is yet to come.

The first fact which emerges from this study is the mistake, ought we not rather to say the wrong, of expecting little beings so constituted to take part, with the older pupils, in lessons which last as long as forty-five minutes, sitting quiet, and attending all the time.

When sufficient force of control is brought to bear it is possible to produce Infants who conform to these conditions, but at what a cost ! The results are on a par with the bandaged and malformed foot of a Chinese lady.

Short lessons lasting from fifteen minutes to twenty minutes are what are wanted. In places where only a single room is available, and when the Infants must be with the rest of the school, the difficulty may be met to a certain extent by having two lessons and treating each in a different way ; in the first period the previous week's lesson might be again introduced, not as a mere recapitulation but with new illustrations and altered presentation. For this, however, considerable skill would be needed ; if a story has gone home children are impatient of unmeaning changes, when it comes again. It would be safer to have

two fresh lessons, making them as distinct as possible in subject and treatment ; the Calendar lesson would naturally form one, the other might be a lesson from another portion of the Calendar, or better, something quite apart, chosen by the teacher.

At best, however, such a device as the above can effect little, it is a counsel of despair ; for any real success with Infants a separate room there must be. We shall therefore assume that such a room is at our disposal, and consider how it is to be used.

First as to furniture. Here the important thing to remember is the size of the pupil. Neither in the junior or baby class, nor among the Infants proper, can there be any but very little folk. Place a high office stool in the middle of a room and induce an adult to sit on it, with legs dangling in the air. How unrestful the victim will be ! how soon requests for liberation will come ! Yet this is the position to which Infants are commonly sentenced, and so far from receiving pity, they are expected to be especially "good" when so perched.

Low seats, which will allow the feet to rest upon the ground, are essential. Those who can furnish as they please will supply each Infant with a low chair, next best are low seats or forms with

backs. There should be at least two heights, in order that the specially diminutive size of the Babies may be fitted. There should also be low tables or small desks for such purposes as drawing, of which more hereafter. Essential also is some musical instrument. The singing of hymns, and marching to time ought to enter largely into infant school life, and for these either a piano or a harmonium is necessary. In addition to the essentials, there are many articles of equipment from which much help may be derived. Good is it if the room or rooms are spacious, sunny, and tasteful; good too if they are hung with attractive and appropriate pictures; good also if the school supplies the helps to "expression" which are so useful, some would say so indispensable, in the forming of the infant. All of these some will have before long; some of them many will have never. In considering how to plan for our children we shall therefore deal chiefly with what ought to be in reach of every school, touching more lightly upon less necessary though desirable additions.

With rooms and furniture ready, our next care is the organization or classification of the school.

There will be two main divisions—the Babies or juniors, the Infants or seniors. All under six



count as Babies. Infants range from six to about eight. It is well not to have too rigid an age rule ; children develop unevenly. Take six and eight as guiding lines, but let progress decide in each case. A very important question arises in connexion with the number of classes into which each division should be formed. Unfortunately the answer will generally be governed by circumstances outside the control of the organizer. Sunday School Teachers are not to be had at command, and Infant Teachers are not easily found. For these reasons there is a tendency to indulge in the "grouping system". In day schools it is common to see thirty or forty infants managed by a single Teacher, and the question may be asked why should we not follow this example in Sunday Schools? To which we make reply: If a Teacher skilled and trained is available you might do worse ; yet you might do much better ; the trained Teacher does manage large numbers successfully, and to outward appearance all goes well ; but under such circumstances the individual loving care, which is of such special value, is out of the question. You will therefore make much better provision if you break up each division into small classes. The exact number in each class will depend partly on the number of Teachers available, partly on each

Teacher's skill, but speaking generally ten or eight Infants will form a suitable class, and six or even four Babies will supply plenty of material for the Teacher's care.

Having arranged for our divisions and our classes, we pass on to consider how we are to occupy the pupils. Here they come full of life and activity, eagerly looking out into the world which surrounds them, gifted with wonderful power of assimilating and reproducing all they meet, but not capable as yet of doing any one thing either very thoroughly or very long. What are we to do with them when we get them? How are we to make the most of the precious opportunity which is ours? This is a large and comprehensive subject which will occupy most of our remaining space. Let us postpone the details of the teaching methods to another chapter and deal here with the general principles by which we should be guided, and with the externals or framework which will give them a natural setting.

We ask first, What is our aim in bringing the infants to Sunday School? By which is meant not the great spiritual aim—to win lives for Christ—upon which we are all agreed, but the ruling or predominant means to be employed in working towards this great end.

In one of the earliest writers about Infants we find a warning upon the subject which has not been sufficiently taken to heart: "The radical error which has vitiated so many efforts in Infant School education is the confounding of *education* with a little *intellectual instruction*."<sup>1</sup>

Quite commonly we collect the Infants with the object of teaching them a number of Bible stories, with the further object of getting them to answer at an examination, with the still further object of adorning them with prizes and ourselves with the gratification of having prepared and sent them in to win. In an ideal state there would be no examination, and learning would be sought for its own sake. We stand, however, far from such perfection, and there are many offices which examinations must continue to discharge. For instance, where there is a scholarship involving free education, examination is the only known means of picking out the most suitable candidate: and again, where it is a question of selecting the individuals most fitted for the discharge of difficult duties, as, for instance, those connected with the Civil Service, no better means than examination has as yet been devised. But the Kingdom of Heaven, standing as it does open to all, enforces no such tests, and it would seem

<sup>1</sup> "Early and Infant School Education," Currie.

to follow logically that our Sunday Schools, whose object is preparation for the Kingdom, should avoid examination as far as possible, and only use the system, if at all, in the most cautious and least harmful way. In the upper portions of the school, when the rivalry of pupil with pupil, of class with class, and still more of school with school is discouraged, and prizes are given to all who reach a definite standard, in such cases it is quite possible, under present circumstances even probable, that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. But in the case of Infants everything points the other way. The little ones are not in need of artificial stimulus, the interest which they take in all which comes their way is keen and eager ; there is danger real and serious in stirring up premature proficiency ;<sup>1</sup> what we want is to get the Bible and religion welcomed and loved for their own sake ; they carry rich rewards in themselves, on these let attention be focused.

We decide, therefore, that in planning our Infant Sunday School, examination must be kept on one side.

A suggestive educational motto says : " Let the improvement of the pupils be your polestar, and their happiness your cardinal points ". The

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 14.

children's happiness, as well as their improvement, should be continually in view as we plan. It would be easy to show that whenever the Saviour dealt with children he made them glad and joyful. Innumerable artists have drawn for us Jesus surrounded with the infants, whom the mothers had brought for blessing. They are unanimous in pouring over all a radiant light : in that Presence there are no children who are not bright and happy. Some hold that there is a tendency to-day to make education too facile. We are certainly far gone from the time when it was considered well to impress each new fact of importance with a blow, and it may be that with elder pupils the strenuous side of the work calls for more emphasis. It is not so with Infants. Through the sheer force of nature, to be active, to be doing, in fact to be at work, is their delight, we have but to act as guides and lead their activities into right channels.

It has been said that "the Infant Teacher who is not afraid to begin by letting her children *do what they like* will usually find it possible very soon to make them *like what they do* under her suggestion and guidance".<sup>1</sup>

It is a paradoxical way of saying that the play in which Infants indulge is naturally educative,

<sup>1</sup> "The Infant School," ch. I.

and that we cannot do better than make use of it in Infant School work. We may state the same truth in a different manner by saying that all the work in the Infant School should be of the nature of play ; which means that we should so prepare and present their occupations that their natural activities would set to work upon them just as they do in the case of their self-devised play. There is, in truth, no radical difference between work and play, the difference lies not in what is done, but in the spirit in which it is done.

Two men spend a day in the garden. One is the owner ; he has selected this way of spending a holiday ; he is at play. The other is the gardener ; what he does is what he is engaged to do ; to have the tasks shared by the employer makes no difference in the character of the employment ; he is at work. Similarly in the cricket field ; here is a "professional" ; it is his duty to take part in the game ; to him, therefore, cricket is work ; to the rest it is play. In these cases, as in all, the difference is not in the thing done, but in the motive for doing it. The amateurs take their gardening and their cricket for the sake of the pleasure they find in them. The thing itself supplies the motive. The professionals dig or bowl for the sake of their salaries ; the motive is supplied by something

external—the pay. It follows, therefore, that in proportion as we take an interest in our work, for its own sake, it becomes as play to us.

The principle thus established is of quite peculiar importance in dealing with Infants. The plays in which they indulge so continuously, and with such verve, are nature-appointed means for developing not only body but mind.<sup>1</sup> What they amount to is the Infant's nature-chosen work. Plainly, therefore, we shall do well to adapt what we prescribe for the Infants, so far as may be, to the principles which nature teaches. By so doing we shall make their work as it were play, we shall, in fact, transform it into play; heart and soul will be thrown into the occupation, and in the results we shall reap the reward of an education rightly planned, and successfully conducted.

The mother of some children who attend a Sunday School ordered on principles such as these was interviewed lately, and asked what she thought of its influence. In this school no prizes are given, and there is no external stimulus. In reply the mother said that to attend was the chief pleasure of the week, so much so that if anything interfered it was considered a lamentable calamity.

And now the question presses—What definite steps are we to take, as we pursue the improve-

<sup>1</sup>See above, p. 13.

ment in connexion with the happiness of our Infants?<sup>1</sup> What practical means can we employ to lead the children to devote themselves to Sunday School for its own sake? Here it is at once necessary to say that from the nature of the case no rules of sovereign and universal application can be laid down. Differences in circumstances call for differences in treatment ; even when the treatment likely to answer best is clear, the means of applying it in its completeness may be absent. This, however, may be confidently affirmed. Given the right spirit, the means will not tarry. If those who have to make the plans, either for the school as a whole or for individual classes, approach the subject in the spirit here postulated, plans rich in results are sure to follow.

Having so said, we shall proceed to unfold and explain the means which have been found useful elsewhere. They come before us having borne the test of experience, and as such deserve respectful attention. In presenting them there is no intention of urging their instantaneous or their wholesale adoption. What is asked is that the parts most easily worked should be attempted at an early date. It is believed that wherever an intelligent experiment of the kind is made the benefits derived will be so great that no effort

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise stated, Infants is to be taken as including Babies.



will be spared to make further introductions, and to develop the system in every possible way.

We commence by dealing with the machinery to be employed.

As we look at the children we note that their machinery, in the busy task of play, consists of feet, ears, lungs, eyes, and hands. We must bring ourselves into touch by devising means for making use of all these willing instruments.

Here are some of the means ready to our hands for doing this.

*Marching.*—The march gives the restless feet something definite to do, and it trains the ear to rhythm. If it keeps time with music so much the better. What the band is to the dancers, such is the instrument to the children; it seems to lift their feet for them. Sometimes a hymn whose tune moves to march time may be employed. Older people are not insensible to the stirring and inspiring influence of a "Processional".

There are two uses obviously marked out for the march. The Infants will march in at the beginning and will march out at the end. Often, too, it will be found beneficial to work off fits of fidgets by introducing a march in the middle. In many schools it is customary to make a collection. When this is done it is well to let the Infants

march up in order to the box or boxes, instead of handing them round.

In order to make the marching a really profitable feature a good deal of care is required. See that the children are well marshalled before the start is made. For the opening march this is best done in an outer room, or a passage, or perhaps even in the open air, when the weather favours. See that each Teacher accompanies her class, to preserve the line, to help them to keep time, and to guide them to their places. Don't be satisfied until good time is the rule. More than half the pleasurable profit is lost if the marching is ragged. It is even worth while to spend labour in teaching the little ones to keep step. For this a clear and simple starting signal is essential. To get all left feet and all right feet down together is not an achievement to be had for the asking, and in many cases the keeping of time, regardless of which foot descends, is all that can be accomplished. This, however, may be accepted—the better the marching is managed, the better the Infants will like it. When it is really well done they will become so proud of taking their part, that it will be a difficult thing to prevent punctual attendance for the opening procession.

*Physical Exercises.*—When there is no col-

lection to give opportunity for a march as an interval, physical exercises may be used with great advantage, indeed they will be valuable at any time when attention flags or weariness obtrudes. Well-planned exercises will call into action the whole of the Infant panoply. Feet and hands in the movements, ears and eyes in catching and imitating the directions, lungs in the song which fitly accompanies them, all will find scope for the activity, which is at once a necessity and a delight.

The exercises with which most of the children are familiar in the day school will be suitable; they can be learned from any trained Teacher. A better plan, however, would be to devise some simple and distinctive forms, which would be specially connected with the Sunday School. This ought not to prove a difficult task. In the day school each new song calls for its appropriate exercises. The faculty of invention is not confined to six days in the week.

It will be an advantage for every one who has charge of Infants to practise instruction of this kind. The exercises have a moral as well as a physical value. Those who can lead them have a new power of control placed at their disposal. The children who perform them with exactitude are learning important lessons in obedience.

Exercises are as much in place in the home as in the school. There is, however, no binding necessity for every teacher to master the set or sets devised for the Sunday School. All the classes can move under the direction of a single leader. If the Babies have a separate room, as they should where it can be given, two leaders will be wanted, when all are together, only one. At a given signal all will sit at attention, at a second they will rise, at a third they will move to any formation the exercises may require. Then will come the exercises brightly done to a musical accompaniment of tune, or song, or both. Then similar signals will restore the former order, and the lesson will proceed, quickened by the variety of thought and movement which the exercises have provided.

There is one form of exercise which deserves separate mention, both because it is so simple as to be universally applicable, and also because its value is so great that no children should be left without it.

Exercises in breathing ought to be for all. The singing master will tell you that good singing depends upon good breathing. The Teacher of elocution proclaims that all good speaking depends upon how the lungs are used. The physician is equally emphatic in holding that to

take only short breaths, or to breathe through the mouth habitually, are fruitful sources of physical disaster.

Get the Infants to sit up straight, with heads erect and shoulders thrown well back, make them draw in their breath slowly through the nose, taking care that the chests expand well and that the shoulders do not rise. For a brief moment get the breath held, and then allow them to breathe out slowly, deliberately, with full control all the time. A practice of this kind has all the advantages of other physical exercises, so far as lungs are concerned, even including warmth ; few things warm better on a cold day than deep inspiration. It has two advantages quite its own : it teaches a habit of priceless importance for the whole of life ; and it may be employed by any individual teacher without interfering with the rest of the school. Even when there is no help for it but to teach the whole Sunday School in a single room, there is nothing to prevent the Infants having this silent, helpful rest.

*Singing.*—Children at play delight in the use of their lungs. We cannot introduce into our Sunday Schools the shouting which is so delicious and healthful in the open air, but in singing we have a substitute which is not only excellent and attractive in itself, but which may

be made the vehicle for much earnest religious teaching.

It is hard to find a child who is indifferent to music, and most children love singing; it is a natural taste which can be used with the greatest advantage in our spiritual work. Not sufficient devotional use is made of hymns. Too commonly they are regarded not so much as devotion under another form, but as intervals more or less pleasant according to our disposition. This view reaches a climax, when, as is sometimes the case, hymn after hymn is sung sitting, before the service proper begins. The result of this treatment is that very often the words of hymns have little meaning for those who sing them. It is the custom at Kildare Place when students enter to ask for a simple paraphrase of a verse of some well-known hymn. The answers show that numbers have never thought about what they sing. Even so distinguished a man as Bishop Harvey Goodwin has told with what deep pleasure he *began*, as a young man, to enter into the meaning of hymns, which before to him had been little more than tunes.

Attention and forethought in the matter of music and words would go far towards remedying this serious devotional loss. Whatever music we choose, whether for hymns or songs, let it be

the best available. Now that so many are good musicians it ought to be possible to get really good players. Many who have no special vocation for teaching might be found ready to take charge of the harmonium or piano. Musicians so chosen might be trusted to bring good music with them. Then the words. The hymnal has some hymns which every child should know, and these may with advantage be supplemented from other sources. It is worth while to take trouble about the selection. There should be hymns adapted to the great seasons of the Christian year, sometimes the lessons of the day should be associated with appropriate hymns.

The most natural places for hymns are the beginning and the end. When the Infants have separate rooms it is best that they should first march with the rest into the main room, and there take part in the opening hymn, after which they march to their own quarters. At the close the Infants march back, and take part in the final hymn. This plan enables the Superintendent, or any one of the Teachers who is specially gifted, to teach new hymns to all at once, and by properly graduated questions to draw attention to, and get the meaning understood. Good work would be accomplished, if, after singing the hymn for the day, one already known, a single verse

of a fresh hymn were taught in this way each Sunday.<sup>1</sup>

*Pictures and Objects.*—The eyes of the children, impelled by their active curiosity, are always on the range. We must press them into our service by providing material for their explorations. This can be done by means of pictures and objects, chosen with a view to illustrate the lesson of the day. Hints as to the best way to use these illustrations will come naturally into our next chapter. Here it will be enough to say that no lesson given to Infants should be without an appeal to the eye. Sacred pictures of all descriptions are to be had, either in black and white or in colours, at most moderate cost, and models have been prepared, illustrating the features of Eastern life, and the ritual of the Israelites. The pictures, which are a matter of pence, might well be provided by the Teachers. The models, which cost a little more, ought to be purchased once for all out of the funds of the school, or by subscription. They should be carefully kept in a glass case or cupboard, in the charge of a special curator.

*Drawing.*—In all that has been said hitherto

<sup>1</sup> There is a valuable chapter which enters fully into the subject of music in the Sunday School in "New Methods in the Junior Sunday School," by Hetty Lee, M.A.



we have been moving along usual lines. Marching and physical exercises, though not often emphasized, and not seldom entirely absent, are yet sufficiently familiar; few, if any schools have failed to make some use of singing; pictures, and to a less extent models, have been commonly used; only indolence as to their purchase, as distinct from any ignorance of their value, has prevented their becoming universal. It is probable that what has been said about the permanent value of their help, and their special fitness for satisfying the requirements of child nature, may present them to many in a new light, but they will have the advantage of appearing as old, and to a certain degree as tried friends.

It is different with the remaining means which are available for bringing into use the natural equipment of the child. Everyone indeed knows what is meant by drawing, in the ordinary sense of the word, and most people are aware of the delight which young children take in covering slate or paper with what appears to be a meaningless medley of lines and dots. Not many, however, among the general public know the importance which is now being attached to these hieroglyphical creations as means whereby the children give expression to their thoughts and ideas; and certainly until the last few years

drawing, as a means of "expression," found no place in the Infant Sunday School.

In pleading for the introduction of drawing, or rather for *allowing* Infants to draw—an occupation so congenial will require no *introduction*—it will be right to make clear what the drawing of Infants is meant to be and to do.

Nowadays "drawing" is a school subject of prominence and importance, and its teachers require elaborate and prolonged training. If we were advocating drawing of this kind for infants, the Sunday School Teachers might go scatheless if they pleaded incapacity, and declined the attempt. But what we are asking is nothing more difficult than leave for the children to do in school what they are always doing in the nursery. The essence of drawing of this kind is that it should be the spontaneous product of the child. The Teacher in the lesson supplies the thoughts, the child by drawing gives expression to the ideas into which these thoughts have shaped themselves for him. All that is required of the Teacher is to provide pencil and paper—if blackboards are convenient they may be used, due regard being had to the danger of chalk in connexion with new dresses; then let the class spend a few minutes producing their ideas of the scenes which have been brought before them.

There need be no fear as to the general capacity of children to thus express themselves. The common delight which Infants take in scribbling is proof sufficient of this. Nor is there any validity in the objection that such scribbblings lack worth and meaning. Worth from the artist's standpoint they have none, and meaning from our standpoint may be hard to discover—it needs an expert to read a child's work with full intelligence; but of this you may rest assured, from the standpoint of the child the drawings are full of meaning, and that is the one thing that matters. It is, however, by no means necessary to allow that merit will be wholly absent. Those who have heard Mr. Ablett lecture will remember how highly he praises the drawings in which children give expression to the images which have formed in their minds. The writer has had opportunity of seeing the work of quite an ordinary class of Infants, upon their first introduction to exercises of the kind. All were able to do something; the majority produced drawings whose general meaning no one could misunderstand.

Still, however, the question may be pressed—What is the good of it all? Let us grant that infants are capable of this spontaneous work, but why introduce it into the Sunday School? If we remember that we are dealing with little beings

of ceaseless activity, and for whom variety of employment is essential, it might be sufficient to point to the delight the Infants take in their pencils, and to say that for them drawing is a joy, and its use serves to connect happiness with the Sunday School. This, however, would be a lamentable understatement of the case. The improvement which is our polestar shines out plainly amid the enjoyment of the exercise. Few educational maxims are more true than that "Children learn by doing". Even the adult needs to take precautions, if the things he sees and hears are to remain vivid. What we hear is more easily recalled if we make notes either at the time or immediately after ; what we see gains permanence if, while gazing, we close our eyes and imagine the scene, then open them and correct the impressions where erroneous or defective. Similarly with our Infants. If they set to work to compose pictures of the stories they have heard, the events will take shape and live, the impression will deepen by the act of expression. Thus their drawings, in addition to providing an outlet for their activity, and so ministering to their happiness, are of high educational value.

Even with all this to its credit, the value of drawing in the Infant classes is not exhausted.

What it can do for the pupils has been shown ; it remains to say a word about what it can do for the Teacher.

There are few means whereby we can look so directly into that labyrinth—the child's mind. If we care to interpret the curious collection of symbols, by means of which he serves up his mental pictures, full opportunity will be given of checking and correcting the impressions we have made. If none of the class can represent anything they have been taught—an unlikely contingency—then we must either resign or reform. If a number of different versions are presented we shall take to heart the necessity for being clearer and more precise. But if the version presented by the picture be correct in the main, we shall have the satisfaction of knowing that the lessons have gone home, and further, keen pleasure will await us as we gain insight into individual minds, by means of the many characteristic touches and variations which different pupils will introduce.

*Modelling in Clay and Sand.*—Our hints with reference to the means available for encouraging children to express themselves, would be incomplete without allusion to a method of expression which has many warm advocates. Just as a coloured picture means more to a child than one

in black and white, so a model is more satisfying than any picture. It presents as it were the thing itself. Even without our help the constructive activity of children leads them to modelling. Witness the mud-pies and sand-castles already alluded to. It is an exercise which uses eyes and hands in a very comprehensive way, one which combines all the educational advantages of drawing, with some which belong exclusively to itself. Unfortunately there are some difficulties connected with the work which are likely to retard its introduction into Sunday Schools. The children indeed will always be ready to do their part in the matter *con amore*; but the Teachers find their way impeded by the expense of the materials, and the need of special training if satisfactory results are to be obtained. It may be that the rising enthusiasm for Sunday Schools will before long succeed in overcoming these difficulties; in the meantime a step in the right direction may easily be taken, by providing the babies with Sand Trays and sand. The initial cost is small, and the working presents no serious obstacles. The same instinct which revels in the sand of the seashore will delight in the outlet offered by the Sand Tray. The exercise is capable of filling with pleasure and instruction many a gap which would otherwise go to waste.

Before we pass as it were within, and seek to apply, in the regions of the mind and of the spirit, what we have learnt about the nature of our pupils, let us accept a caution which comes from observing childish restlessness. We have seen that in all their ways instability is, and must be, an Infant characteristic ; in no part of our dealing with them let us so far forget ourselves as to forget this.

Teachers may, nay must, set to work with the object of having an attentive and quiet class. There is nothing to prevent their succeeding if the teaching is bright and brief, and the occupations are sufficiently varied. But the teacher must not fall into the delusion of expecting order and discipline for the asking.

“ Sit still, Polly ! ” “ Don’t fidget, Jack ! ” “ Be quiet, Nellie ! ” expletives of this kind—such they come to be—amount to nothing but melancholy proclamations of the Teacher’s failure. Here are two classes similarly composed. One is all noise and motion, i.e. commotion. The pupils, each busy with whatever comes to hand—a neighbour’s seat, or dress, or hair—incessantly turn and twist ; what the teacher is saying concerns them not at all ; a sharp wrench into an upright or face-forward position, or an indignant personal remonstrance, may steady for one moment, only

to prepare for a more complete relapse the next. The whole is an illustration of the futility of the method which has been stigmatized as the "everlasting don't". In the other class difficulties never seem to arise. It is not that the Teacher anticipates, and by swift intuition checks disorder, before it shows above the surface. Under her guidance there is no temptation, no inclination even, to wander. She knows the capacity of her pupils, and conducts them along suitable paths. Her actual lessons are brief and full of variety. At points where attention may be expected to flag, she is ready with devices to arouse; long maintenance of any one position is not expected; provision is made for relaxation and for change. She is a *leader* not a *driver*.

In the mastering of this distinction, the distinction between *leading* and *driving*, lies all the difference between success and failure. It is not that a teacher must be expected, or must expect herself to enter at once into the leader's rôle; to few is this given; but this is the end at which she must aim, and when she notes the various symptoms which tell that success is not as yet complete, let her beware of setting down to the account of the class what she should charge to herself. It seems almost paradoxical to maintain that a Teacher should seldom have to say "thou



shalt" or "thou shalt not"; yet so great an authority as Froebel considers it no less than a moral calamity to be compelled to have recourse to such imperatives. When Infants fidget, either in body or mind, there is always something amiss, but it is in the situation not in the child. Fidgets are a signal, not a defect; when they break out it is a call for change, the child's natural demand for variety, and the cure—is not "suppress" but "give another lead".

## CHAPTER V.

### APPLICATION TO THE SUNDAY SCHOOL OF THE RESULTS OF THE EXCURSION—II.

THUS far, in applying to the teaching of Infants the principles which have been learned from themselves, we have dealt mainly with externals. Let it not be imagined that these externals are merely tricks or devices for ensuring a more successful approach—the gifts which the tenant used to bring, when manœuvring for an important concession. All of them have their appropriate educational value, and all, when wisely directed, may be made to minister to our highest aims. Our main instrument, however, must consist in what we teach. Stories from the Bible, made to illustrate and convey religious truths, very simple Church teaching, grouped round the coming of the great festivals—these are the means to which we must chiefly look for the main work of the school, and we must now give our best attention to the ways they should be used.

Gathering all into a word, we may say that our instruction will consist in *story-telling*. Lest any

should consider this too confined a way of describing the field, we commence by noting the place which the story naturally fills in the Infant world.

Talk is, and must be, the chief means of educating the children. Their inquisitive curiosity makes them eager listeners; their power of imitation enables them gradually to reproduce. It happens that in many homes the range of language used, and the scope of subjects discussed or even touched, are deplorably limited. How difficult it is in business or domestic life to get directions understood! What a puzzle it often is to disentangle the messages or descriptions which are brought! It lies with the school to forearm the children against these disabilities, by providing them with an ample store of language, well chosen and intelligently understood.

For this purpose there is nothing equal to the "talk" which stories supply. Variety and breadth will come naturally from the variety of subjects treated, the style used, while largely what is termed colloquial, will be more formal than ordinary conversation, and will thus become a convenient connecting link between the rough-and-ready "talk" of the household and the literary "talk" of the book. And furthermore, there is nothing which rejoices the heart of a child more than a good story well told. Stories

are the intellectual food in which children find their natural nourishment ; by them, as in no other way, their mental qualities are fully exercised and developed.

Here, perhaps, the candidate Infant Teacher pleads inability to tell a tale. This probably means that a serious effort has never been made. To all women conversation of a kind comes more or less naturally, the capacity for telling a story to her babe may almost be described as a kind of maternal instinct. It is not of course to be expected that the Infant Teacher will be perfect in the art when she begins ; but she is likely to find, when she tries, that her natural gifts are quite sufficient. If she makes use of the hints and helps now to be given, she will find her grasp of the subject developing continually, and becoming a real power in her hands.

The first question for the teacher is, What story shall I tell ? In Sunday Schools the answer is generally supplied by the Calendar. But it will often happen that the prescribed story is well known, and sometimes when this is not the case, there may be time for more than one. Even when all the work is prescribed it is important to bear in mind what children like in tales. This knowledge will affect the handling of the facts, and point their way home.

Writ large upon the dispositions of the children is the answer to our inquiry. Those who are so incessantly active themselves like action in others. Not what the characters say, still less what they think, but what they *do*, proves engrossing.

In Daniel and the lions' den, the preliminary plot and decree will be received with mild attention; the class will rouse up when they see Daniel on his knees praying fearlessly notwithstanding the peril; the report to the king, and the interview, will be listened to only as a stepping-stone to what is to follow, but fever-heat may be reached in the stirring scenes which follow—Daniel's arrest—his committal to the lions—the parallel pictures, Daniel unhurt, with the lions all round him, the king tossing and sleepless in his misery the long night through—the king's early visit and Daniel's triumphant release—the swift and appropriate destruction of the conspirators.

A central rule for the tale is—make all that is *done* prominent and vivid.

The appropriate language of the story has next to be considered. That it must be simple is manifest, but it must not be "babyish". The charming prattle which so delights us has not been deliberately chosen as the most fitting vehicle for a child's talk, on the principle of

‘Esperanto.’ All the time the child is striving to imitate the speech of those it hears, and the prattle is nothing but experiments, as yet imperfect, but growing more perfect daily—like a boy’s efforts when he attempts to learn to swim.

Similarly, just as the child’s words tarry far behind words of the elders with which he is perfectly familiar, so is it with his understanding. There are many things about which he has a good deal of knowledge, but which do not as yet occupy a place in his talk.

From these facts it follows that in adjusting her language, and selecting her materials, the Teacher need not be seriously apprehensive of inability to descend. After all, her object is the elevation of her pupils, and if it does occasionally happen that she is momentarily out of reach, the harm done will be far less than if she never soared at all. But while a concession such as this calls for no apology, and no Teacher need be ashamed of being sometimes misunderstood, it is of last importance to use, in the main, language well within the grasp of the class. Nor need there be any serious difficulty about gauging the proper level. The eye is a wonderful interpreter. As you stand or sit, with eye on pupils, watching the effect of your words, the life which speaks of interest, the deadness which proclaims indifference,

will speedily tell their own tale. Teachers sometimes forget thus to press the eye into their service, and in any case its use requires practice ; but once the art has been acquired, neither indifference to the story, nor any other indifference, will ever prove serious. In the case of the story all that is wanted when it is noticed that the class do not follow, is some restating, and some explanation of points or of words which have proved too difficult.

The great secret to bear in mind when introducing new terms or novel facts is that they must be definitely and clearly connected with the previous knowledge of the children, and so “apperceived”.<sup>1</sup> It is a mistake in method to attempt to explain an unknown word by a definition—very often the definition will be found, for the infant mind, the less accessible of the two. Thus to present “a synagogue” as a “Jewish place of worship,” or “centurion” as the “captain of a hundred soldiers” is defective teaching. The definitions in these cases are sufficiently simple, and as such may do their work. But the better way would be to inquire as to where the children went on Sundays and for what purpose ; this would at once connect the synagogues with their churches ; and in the same way inquiry as to

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 18.

what they called a man who was over or led soldiers, would educe various titles as sergeant, captain, colonel, and this would lead directly to the Roman use of centurion.

The style, as distinct from the language to be used, will also need care and preparation. Style must always be governed by individuality, no two teachers could or ought to have the same style. But while this is so, we may mention a few points, attention to which will help a teacher in forming her own style, and in adapting it to different kinds of stories. When the action is crowded, words must come thick and fast; in ordinary narrative the movement will be gentle; when the catastrophe comes, the whole tone will alter, and all will proceed as it were with measured, solemn tread.

Great care should be taken to employ well formed sentences, but anything approaching to the stilted phraseology of the showman should be shunned. Never learn by heart what is going to be produced in class. Better break every other rule, in the inexperience of your start, than resort to a subterfuge whose artificiality will defeat its ends. Good, simple, straightforward talk is the thing to aim at, and the power should be cultivated of varying it at will, according to the subject, from the colloquial to the literary style.



In connexion with the actual telling of the story, apart from the language of the style, there are a good many matters to which attention may be profitably directed. The most important is concerned with the way in which a story is to be "presented," or the order in which it is to be told. Generally speaking, the written order will always require alteration. The writer commonly unfolds events as they occur. The teller must present them as they will grip. Here, as in all teaching, you need to fasten on the facts most closely related to things within the experience of the class, and by means of the living interest thus secured to lead on to the rest. For instance, in the story of Cain and Abel, it is a mistake to begin by talking about the offerings of the brothers—to Infants these are matters of remote interest. Better at once introduce Cain, say armed with a great club, and enraged with Abel. The interest aroused by such a picture as that will carry you through the explanation of the rage, and will not flag till the sad end is reached.

In connexion with these hints as to "presentation" must come an emphatic word as to the duty of keeping before us all through the definite object of the story we are telling. Each Bible story will contain lessons more than one. If we aim at teaching all we shall teach nothing. Decide,

with care, what you want to convey and let all you do lead up to and converge upon it. If what the pupils already know will show how you ought to begin, what they are to be taught finally will govern arrangement all through.

Very important for success is an insight into the things which interest the pupils. All sorts of anchorages are wanted to prevent the narrative getting as it were into the clouds, and so going out of sight. Nothing can obviate the danger better than grappling what is being presented, to events, whether at home or at school, at play or at work, in connexion with which the pupils' interest has been thoroughly aroused. Zoological gardens at feeding time for Daniel; a shooting gallery for David and Goliath; a domestic economy lesson for Martha and Mary—by such means as these can the narrative be made to move and speak, not a relic of the dead past, but a quickening part of the living present.

Remember, however, that in stepping aside from your main purpose there is always a risk. An illustration which does not illustrate is worse than useless, it does harm, like a sign-post so interesting in itself that people dawdle around it thinking only of its attractions, forgetting all about their road. The moment the thing which the children already understand has cleared up what you want them

to understand, leave it, and get back to the main current again.

Then there is need of much skill in omission. The chronicler sets down, one after another, all things that came his way. Deadly dullness results. The historian on the other hand selects. He knows what is important and what should stand out, and here he has no fear at all of details, he is lavish with them; but in the case of events which are unimportant, details disappear altogether. What would be thought of an artist who, in painting a wedding, made all the guests as prominent as the bride and bridegroom? Nothing will be remembered of a story which is effaced by a similar fault.

A certain amount of histrionic power is an invaluable possession for conveying a tale. When conversations are reported, the part of each speaker should be taken in turns. In no case should what is said be given baldly in the third person.

The necessity of making the narrative live and move, must be always present. We want the children to see with the eyes of the imagination what is happening. We cannot succeed unless we see the events ourselves. We shall best learn the secret of doing this by identifying ourselves with the characters and the events, as an actor identifies himself with his part.

In working up the tale and approaching the climax, the engrossing effect of suspense should not be neglected. What good novelist ever failed to draw upon this resource. There are numbers of Bible stories which lend themselves directly to its use. The sacrifice of Isaac, Joseph's brethren in Egypt, Elijah on Mount Carmel, and numerous other instances will at once occur in illustration.

High as is the importance of being able to tell a story well, even more important is its application. You want it to go home to your class, and to go home in the best possible way, clear in its own outlines, full charged with the best possible teaching. By the application of a story is not meant any special moral lesson which it may or may not teach, the subject of pointing a moral will engage us presently. The application means the impressing of the story, as a whole, as permanently as possible upon the class. When you feel satisfied that your pupils know the story as you have told it to them, with its prominent parts standing out, and its leading lesson clear, then all is well with the application.

There are various ways whereby this result can be reached, and teachers will use one or other or all, according to the necessities of the case, bearing in mind that the moment it is plain

that the class have mastered the story, that moment the means being employed must cease.

Questions are of great value both for ascertaining how far you have succeeded, and also for drawing attention to points whose connexion or bearing may not have been grasped. Space will not permit of giving rules for the framing of questions, such may be found in any book on method; but a word is required as to *when* questions in connexion with story-telling should come in. It is sometimes urged that the continuity of the tale should not be broken by questions, that the class should live in imagination in the atmosphere of those who are being brought before them—the judge, the prophets, the kings—and that no question should bring them back to the everyday life of school.

This is good in theory, and there are Teachers so gifted that they can hold the children tranced, as it were, in the world of the story. Such is the power of the teller that everything goes home, and when the end comes at last every question asked will be answered.

By all means aim at a perfection of presentation so complete that the very telling of the tale ensures its application. But do not be surprised if you fail, at any rate at first, to reach it. A much easier method will consist in having the

story divided into sections, and in questioning as each section closes. A good working rule is, on the one hand, always question, the moment any lapse of attention is noticed, and on the other, continue without break so long as you are certain that you are carrying the class with you.

The re-telling of the story by the class is an "application" exercise which has every argument in its favour except ease. A single child may be entrusted with the telling, or different parts may be told by different children. Where such a habit prevails the result to the pupil is far-reaching; not only are the stories they retell "applied" in a manner pre-eminently effective, but they are equipped with a power over language which, whether for speaking or for writing, will be invaluable in after life. The difficulty of attaining success is, however, formidable. To get even one child to "re-tell" a story requires peculiarly intimate and confidential relations with the class as a whole, as well as with the particular child; to obtain a number of re-tellers is proportionately more difficult. Then there is the necessity for securing the co-operation of all the other pupils; they must be interested, ready to correct if asked, prepared to take up the thread themselves when necessary. Proficiency such as

this will not be won without effort and perseverance; it will, however, amply repay any labour it may entail.

Further methods of "application" will be found in the drawing, or in the modelling, which have been described in the previous chapter.

In these, as in each of the other methods, the point to be borne in mind is that the inborn activity of the children naturally seeks for an outlet. While the story is being told, if it is told well, they will listen motionless, but when it ceases the time has come for their activity to express itself, and "expression" work of all kinds provides the scope for activity which nature demands, and furthermore, in so doing offers the best possible means of making permanent whatever has been taught.

Before leaving the "application" of the story, something needs to be said about the more limited use of the term, according to which it means the "pointing of the moral". Our concluding chapter will deal with the growth of character and of religion in the heart of the child, but the technical question of drawing verbal moral lessons from a subject will be in place here.

Nothing is easier for the teacher than to gather together at the close of a story, or a part of it,

one or more moral truths. "St. Stephen's death teaches us to forgive our enemies." "St. Peter's deliverance from prison teaches God's power to protect and save." These and such-like "lessons" will be repeated glibly by the lips of the pupils. This, however, is a very different thing from getting the teaching embedded in their lives; in fact, experience would seem to say that so far from helping, the verbal expression of moral precepts even tends to have an injurious effect. Emotionalism is dangerous when it stands alone. To be profitable it must be translated into acts. As the opportunity for acts on the part of the pupils is not likely to occur in connexion with the class, mere verbal pointing of the lesson is out of place.

This in itself would be sufficient to suggest hesitation before attempting a system of moral reflections; but from an educational standpoint the practice is open to further objections. "Never deprive children of the sacred right of discovery," was one of Pestalozzi's pregnant sayings. We disregard this most wise advice when we do the discovery ourselves. It is of course possible to handle the subject in such a way as to get the children to find for themselves the moral, and put it into their own words. This gets rid of the educational blemish, but the prac-



tical defect remains. The better way is to tell the story with the clear and definite aim of setting forth some great truth or principle. Let the truth be enshrined in vivid action, such as will engross the attention of the children, but let the guiding principle which controls and directs the action be unmistakably clear.

Stories so taught will sink down into the minds of the children. Without incurring the danger of barren emotionalism, they will have food for reflection and imitation in a well-stocked gallery of noble deeds. They will discover for themselves what to do and what to think, and when opportunity for action arises they will be stored with rightly instructed energy.<sup>1</sup>

All that now remains to be said in connexion with the methods of the Infant Sunday School

<sup>1</sup> The following, taken from a letter written unconventionally by one friend to another, puts brightly and freshly the case against "pointing morals".

"I hate morals" ("pointing morals" is what is meant) "and even when I give an illustration to my Sunday class, and proceed to draw the usual moral from it, I loathe it, and myself, for being such an idiot as to suppose that the girls will ever tack that particular moral on, when (if they ever do) they remember the story. Of course they won't; one experiences one's own morals from the story of life; every one does, only perhaps they don't recognize them as morals, and then they don't do their proper work.

will consist in some observations upon the proper use of pictures and other illustrations. They have been reserved for the close, partly on account of their importance, partly because the subject is as a rule so entirely ignored. That pictures are valuable, especially for the teaching of Infants, every one will allow, but scarcely any can be found who take the trouble to use them properly ; it may be that the prominence of a section devoted solely to their use will do something to secure for pictures the attention they deserve.

If you show a map to an uneducated person it means to him—nothing. To the ordinary schoolboy or schoolgirl the map is little more than a coloured canvas on which, if they look closely, they can detect the names for which the teacher calls. Often a pupil will be satisfied by finding the name only, no attention being paid to the little mark which indicates the precise locality of the town, or the wavy line which tells the exact course of the river. Where better methods prevail, not only will the situation of the town, and the flow of the river from source to mouth be noted, but the map will be searched for evidence as to why towns arise in this place as distinct from that, and as to the causes which determine the flow of rivers. Where contour

maps are used, the amount of information open to the skilled map explorer becomes indefinitely extended, if the scale is sufficiently large the whole country will lie before him, almost as though he were in it.

Somewhat similar is the difference between pictures wrongly and rightly used. What we need to bear in mind is that, just as only a few can thoroughly read a map, so very many are unable to read a picture. A few very simple tests will teach you where you stand yourself, and where your acquaintances stand in this scale of proficiency. Show, for instance, two views of a village, and try to get pointed out in the one the features which also occur in the other; show an external and an internal view of a cathedral, and see if your friend can find the outside of the different parts which are conspicuous inside. The above make but slender demands upon the skill, yet many will be found quite unable to respond to the test. If more difficult picture reading is suggested, and you attempt, say, to get an accurate description of a representation of a man in armour, of a special tree or flower, of an agricultural implement, or indeed of any object whatsoever, a picture of which has just been shown, the deficiencies and inaccuracies will be astonishing, and will demonstrate how completely the

ordinary eye fails to take in what the picture has to say.

It follows that if pictures and other illustrations are to be of value in class they must be handled with care and thoroughness. To hand round a series of illustrations, just giving the title of each as it leaves your hand, will cause only bewilderment. An even worse method is to hang up a picture before the class just saying what it represents, and nothing more. The little eyes will keep wandering up and down, and in and out, all the time the picture is there. The children will not understand what they see, and they will be interrupted in listening to you.

If the picture is to do its work time must be given to its exposition. The best plan is to have a copy for every two or three children. This is not over-burdensome in these days of picture post cards and cheap reproductions.<sup>1</sup> But very good work can be done with a rough illustration placed or held where all can see it. Whichever method is employed the result will be good or bad according as the attention of the pupils is directed to the salient features. Get them to describe what they see. Help the descriptions by questions, drawing attention to omissions. When

<sup>1</sup> Most of the great pictures of the world can now be obtained at the price of one penny each.

an important feature is named, point to it, and question as to its meaning. Vary the procedure by requiring individual children to put their fingers on features named by you. Finally, remove the picture and ascertain if the points you have emphasized are remembered, and pictured as it were in the mind's eye. It may be necessary to bring the picture back again and again before this is successfully accomplished ; so soon, however, as you are satisfied that the representation is as it were photographed in the mind, you may rest assured that your aim has been accomplished, and this with a clearness and a thoroughness not possible in any other way.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF THE CHILDREN.

WE have now reached the subject which stands above and behind all else. That "character building is the supreme end of education" no one will deny. For the Sunday School Teacher, as for the Christian mother, character building will mean so working with, and influencing the children, that they will walk with God, and be the faithful servants of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Let it not be supposed that the previous chapters have no bearing on this all-important subject. Just as it was possible to claim for methods, which presented for the most part an external appearance, that they had an important bearing upon the work of teaching, and were of high educational value, so may it be claimed both for the externals with which Chapter IV was occupied, and for the teaching by means of stories properly illustrated, that they minister in the best possible way, often in the only possible way, to the religious growth of the child.

A moment's consideration will show that from the very nature of the case this must be so. We can train children to march and to sing, we can teach them the truths which Christ has taught His Church, but to teach them to be themselves religious, to implant true religion in their hearts, is the office of the Holy Spirit. It follows, therefore, that when our subject is the religious life of the child, all that can be done is to consider how the means at our disposal can be so used as to minister to this life. The increase must come from God, but it is ours to work and prepare the soil, ours, too, to plant the good seed.

Bearing this in mind, it will be manifest that this last chapter must deal not with any additional method, but with the spirit which must accompany and underlie everything that we do. It is unhappily only too easy to let an Infant pass through a school conducted in the way described, without any permanent effect in the way of introducing religion into the life. The problem which confronts us urgently, perhaps even sternly, is What can we do to lessen the number of such cases? How can we employ the means at our disposal so wisely, lovingly, and reverently as to dispose the hearts of our pupil to the acceptance of the riches of everlasting life.

In working out the answer, we must start with

recalling the elementary condition of our pupils. As we have seen,<sup>1</sup> Infants are without morals in the adult sense of the term. They do not understand that things in themselves are "right," and "wrong"; all they have grasped is that some things they may, others they may not do, and they look to external authority—in the case of the Sunday School, to us—for direction in all their ways.

It is, therefore, manifest that the way to influence our pupils will not be found in *talking* morals. The whole subject, as a subject, lies outside their reach. You cannot lecture on colours if your hearers have been born blind; not until by some means they have learnt to see, can you get them to discriminate and to understand. It is the same with Infants and morals, their moral sense needs to be developed and formed; until this is done it is useless to talk about it, or to attempt to make it a basis for right action.

But while the Infants cannot understand you if you *talk* morals, there is nothing to interfere with your leading them to *practise* morals; and this is the channel which your activities must take. There they sit or stand, as open to impressions as the flower to every wind that blows. See to

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 39.



it that all impressions which come to them from you are fragrant with wisdom and with love. As you direct and guide, do it always to the best of your ability, and spare no pains to secure the accurate and careful observation of your orders. No matter what the occupation is, whether the most or the least important, seek the earnest and loyal co-operation of all, and do not rest satisfied that everything in your power has been done, until each individual child hangs upon your words and hastens eagerly to fulfil your commands.

In proportion as you succeed you will be using the one means which at this stage is potent for building the character and shaping the religious life, for you will be forming habits, and good habits will act as a staying and guiding influence always, and furthermore they will become a foundation from which the nobler qualities will spring naturally.

It is scarcely possible to exaggerate the importance of good habits. Dr. James, the psychologist, describes habit as "the enormous flywheel of society". Accumulated habits are the most potent contributors to the energy and stability of mankind. Good habits are the safeguards both of the race and the individual. An illustration or two will show how the habits which can be formed

in young children will minister to the right development of character. Politeness and courtesy are easily implanted, or perhaps we should say encouraged, for they seem to come naturally with the grace of childhood. And what an introduction they form to the world of morals! The courteous greeting, the care taken not to jostle or impede, the friendly help in putting away a hat or adjusting a garment—in little acts like these lie germs which if watched and tended will develop into those qualities of sympathy with others, and indifference to self, which are characteristic of beautiful lives.

Or take obedience. Under the influence of numbers, the obedience which is sometimes difficult in the home comes readily in the school. You will be able, if you try, to obtain from the class exact obedience to every order which is understood, and within their powers; and certainly the end is worth all the attention you can give it, for though obedience cannot form the whole world of morals, there is nothing in character and religion to which reasonable and loyal obedience will not naturally lead.

Another means ready to your hand in the work of character building will consist in the use made of the Bible stories. As we have seen, more harm than good is likely to be done by

drawing moral lessons ourselves, and getting them repeated more or less automatically by the pupils. But the results will be different if we can get attention to fasten intelligently on the doings of those whose stories we present. This will be accomplished if, as recommended,<sup>1</sup> we keep clearly before ourselves and our class the main lesson which we wish to convey. Taught by us, the children will see for themselves what it is that wins approval, and is admirable in itself. Their minds will become stored with healthy information. The teaching will have an uplifting and inspiring effect upon their lives.

As has been noted above,<sup>2</sup> the wonderful ways in which the imagination of childhood works makes this faculty a powerful ally for moral, and still more for religious training, and it is in connexion with the story that we have the fullest opportunity of calling it into action ; if the stories are what they ought to be, the minds of the pupils will not only make their own of the pictures we put before them, but they will also acquire the habit of wandering, as it were, in happy realms from which evil retires ashamed and abashed, and where only the good and beautiful prevail.

By such means as these the moral sense of Infants can be gradually developed, and the

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 81.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 37.

foundations of character can be laid. More, however, than this is wanted. Those who advocate the teaching of morals, apart from the sanctions of religion, have done little to convince the world that their systems can command success; the Christian Teacher will earnestly desire to know how the special helps, and strength of religion, a Father's rule, a Saviour's love, the Holy Spirit's guidance, can best be brought home to the Infants.

In answer we at once rule out anything of the nature of theological talk. Talking religion, like talking morality, will have no practical results for good, and may be positively injurious. Precocity in this as in other matters is a danger-signal. There are, however, two potent means at our disposal: one will consist in inculcating reverence in our pupils and in encouraging an atmosphere of reverence throughout the school; the other will be found in letting the children see how precious religion is to us.

An atmosphere of reverence is a first essential in the Sunday School.

When it is absent, it is difficult to see how any true work for God can be accomplished; when it is present its influence is all-pervading. You experience it the moment you enter the room, it has a hallowing influence upon all that is done;

throughout the week when the thought of Sunday School enters the mind, its association of reverence gives it a consecrating power. If we can connect the truths of Christ and of God with the special atmosphere of love and adoration which reverence implies, we shall be making the most hopeful possible preparation for the work of the Holy Spirit in the soul.

Let us, therefore, do all that lies within our power to inculcate reverence. It is not necessary to declare war on brightness. The ideas of religion and of happiness should as it were go hand in hand; to banish every smile would tend not so much towards reverence, as austerity—a most unchildlike quality. There is no necessary contradiction between a teaching that is reverent, and one that is bright and alive. Special opportunities for solemnity will come in the singing of the hymns, and in the offering of prayer. Pay attention to attitude; outward attitude is always symptomatic of inward disposition, and often a wisely trained attitude will have a beneficial effect upon character. The way the Infants stand or march, when singing, should be watched and amended with the most scrupulous care. In particular should minute attention be bestowed on their devotions. When they are taught prayers; as the Lord's Prayer, some Col-

lects, and the simple morning and evening prayers of childhood, the utmost solemnity should characterize the bearing of both Teacher and pupils ; and when all kneel, taking part in the devotions of the school, closed eyes, and folded hands, and reverent position should be universal. In schools where right habits of this kind have not been formed it may call for effort, earnest and prolonged, to bring about a change. But no Teacher should shrink from the attempt ; if she does, she neglects the means which more than any other will enable her to promote the religious atmosphere, and to prepare her pupils to listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

We close with a few words as to what the consecrated life of the Teacher herself can effect. The potent effect of example we all recognize—in theory—and yet how difficult it is to bear in mind continually the influence our deeds and words are exercising. Instead of being at the school five minutes before the time for opening,

<sup>1</sup> "The highest whom I knew on Earth I here saw bowed down, with awe unspeakable, before a Higher in Heaven : such things, especially in infancy, reach inwards to the very core of your being ; mysteriously does a Holy of Holies build itself into visibility in the mysterious deeps ; and Reverence, the divinest in Man, springs forth undying."—"Sartor Resartus," Bk. II. ch. ii.

in order to have everything in readiness, we arrive just as the opening march has begun, with the result that our class is not properly marshalled ; in the opening prayer our thoughts wander from the words and from the children, it may be that even our attitude is not devotional ; we have allowed ourselves to be interrupted in the careful preparation required for giving of our best to the Infants, and we find that their attention wanders, and that the fits of fidgets get beyond control. For these and all the other defects and shortcomings, which mar the Teacher's usefulness, and interfere with the harvest of souls for which the Saviour is longing, we have excuses in abundance ; they satisfy us,—they will not satisfy our Lord. If we are to have success in winning the Infants for Him, they must see that His things are exceeding precious in our sight. As they come to realize that our love of the Master is deep and real, they, in their turn, will be strongly drawn to enter the realm of love themselves. Yes ! we have priceless opportunities if we will but use them, priceless opportunities for good—and also for bad. “The waste in a Teacher's workshop is the lives of men.”





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